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ABSTRACT

This report explores a range of issues related to the successful instruction of literacy-level English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) adults. The paper describes types of programs as well as factors that affect this population. Through a series of teacher interviews, the unique characteristics of these learners as well as suggested curricula are detailed. Appendices include suggested student materials and a reading list. The report is divided into six sections: introduction, types of programs, literature review (including native language literacy, age, trauma, family demands, cultural and individual beliefs, sociopolitical concerns), teacher interviews, curriculum (goals of a literacy-level course, sequence, presentation [including techniques and sample lessons], and assessment), and teacher training workshop materials. (Contains 50 references.) (KFT)

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Successful Instruction for Literacy-Level Adults

BY PATSY VINOGRADOV

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CARLA WORKING PAPER #17

CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
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Successful Instruction for Literacy-Level Adults

By

Patsy Vinogradov

English as a Second Language Program
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

January 2001

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INTRODUCTION

- *3,000 new immigrants arrived to Minnesota in 1998-1999.*
- *3,600 new immigrants are expected in 1999-2000.*
  (Refugee Services Office in Human Resources, 1999).

- *40% of all students in Adult Basic Education classes in the state of Minnesota are learning English as a Second Language.*
  (State Department of Children, Families, and Learning, 1999).

- *The U.S. Department of Education in 1986 showed that 37% of illiterate adults do not speak English at home, and that up to 86% of non-English speakers who are illiterate in English are also illiterate in their native languages. (Huntley, 1992).*

Refugees and immigrants from across the globe with limited native language literacy continue to enter the United States and ESL classrooms. This population of students presents a new challenge for ESL providers. "Not only must they [refugees] possess certain minimal literacy skills to meet the demands of daily life in this country, but they must learn a new language at the same time" (Haverson & Haynes, 1982).

These students are often sent into beginning ESL classes where the basic ability to read and write is assumed. However, it has become clear that "a special class is necessary because the non-literate student has problems that require special attention" (Ranard, 1981). To meet their needs, professionals must first understand who these students are and how they came to live in the Twin Cities.

The following project will explore a range of issues related to successful instruction of literacy-level ESL adults. The paper will describe types of programs as well as factors that affect this population. Through a series of teacher interviews, unique characteristics of these learners as well as suggested curricula will be detailed. Appendices include suggested student materials and a reading list. Literacy-level ESL students are a special and challenging group. Surprisingly little has been written about how to best meet their needs. This project attempts to offer some tentative answers.

Who are the students?

There are three major categories of learners who need adult ESL literacy instruction. While each group is distinct, together they form what I will refer to as ***literacy-level ESL***

students. My definitions are adapted from Haverson and Haynes (1982) and Shank (1986). The definitions refer to the students' literacy and education in their *native* languages.

Pre-literate students: These learners have had no contact with print in their native languages. They represent a group for which there is no written language, only an oral language. Included in this category are students from an oral tradition whose language has only recently developed a written form. In the Twin Cities, many of the Hmong refugees are examples of pre-literate learners. It should be noted that pre-literate students may be so only temporarily. Pre-literate learners may encounter print in their native languages later in life or after immigration to the United States.

Non-literate students: These students have no reading or writing skills but come from a language group that does have a written form. Their literacy level is due to their lack of education rather than a lack of print environment. It may be that there is a written language, but perhaps the learners lived in rural areas where written language could not be easily accessed and was not needed for daily life. Another possibility is that the learners' society has been disrupted by war over time, so that public education has been nonexistent for a generation of learners. In the Twin Cities area, many Somali, Ethiopian, Mexican, and Vietnamese could be considered non-literate.

Semi-literate students: Learners in this category have had very little formal education in their native language, probably not more than 3-4 years. They have had some exposure to print in their native languages and may be able to recognize some common words by sight. Haverson and Haynes speculate that this category of literacy-level students is the largest, but this may not be true for the Twin Cities. As Minnesota's immigrant population changes to include large groups from Somalia and Laos, the number of pre-literate and non-literate students rises. There is no clear way to tell if semi-literate students are still dominant in our ESL classrooms. In the Twin Cities, semi-literate students come from all over the globe, but many are from East Africa, South America, Mexico, and Southeast Asia.

***Note**: Some educators claim that yet a fourth group exists: those literate in a non-Roman alphabet language. These students are educated, highly familiar with print and fully literate in their native language but are simply not familiar with the English sound-symbol relationships. Their situation is quite different. Learning a new alphabet is considerably less of a task than acquiring literacy itself. I do not include this group among literacy-level ESL students. A person learns to read only once.*

How did these students come to live in the Twin Cities?

Literacy-level ESL students are a culturally diverse population. They come from all over the globe and have moved to the United States specifically the Twin Cities for a wide variety of reasons. Literacy-level ESL instructors in Minneapolis and St. Paul encounter mostly Somali, Hmong, and Mexican students. There are many others, but these three groups are among the largest.

"The State Department of Human Services estimates that there are 15,000 Somali refugees in Minnesota, with the vast majority of them having arrived in the last five years. Minnesota has the largest Somali population in the United States" (Immigration Minnesota, 1999). Somalia has been the scene of civil war, clan wars, and a series of natural disasters in recent years. These events caused more than 900,000 Somalis to flee their homes. While some sought refuge in neighboring African countries, others found shelter in the United States. The literacy rate in Somalia is 24%; this fact, combined with years of an interrupted educational system due to war, explains the low literacy ability of many Somali adults in the Twin Cities.

The Hmong are an ethnic group from the mountains of Laos, in southeast Asia. The Hmong aided the CIA during the Vietnam War, and when that conflict ended, thousands had to leave Laos. They walked for weeks, often under fire, to neighboring Thailand after finally crossing the dangerous Mekong River. Since 1975, the Hmong have been leaving the Thailand refugee camps for other countries, including the United States. "From 1975 to 1990, nearly 17,000 Hmong immigrated to Minnesota." Minnesota now has at least 60,000 Hmong residents, "the largest urban Hmong population in the world" (Immigration Minnesota, 1999). Hmong language did not have a written form until the 1950's. Due to their oral tradition and interrupted education, the literacy rate of adult Hmong is quite low.

"The State Demographic Center estimates that there are 125,000 Hispanic immigrants in Minnesota, more than half of whom are Mexican" (Immigration Minnesota, 1999). Mexicans have been settling in Minnesota for over 100 years. The overwhelming reason for immigration has been work; Mexicans have found work in meat packing plants, in food service, and in agricultural industries. While the literacy rate in Mexico is 90%, many of Minnesota's Mexican residents have had very little or no formal education.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Naturally, ESL programs differ greatly, but commonalties in goals persist. Literacy-level ESL students are often new arrivals to the United States. Their immediate needs are for basic survival in their new environment. A major part of this goal is employment. A goal of literacy-level ESL programs is to build a foundation in literacy skills that will allow the learner to continue acquiring English in "mainstream" ESL classes. Such a foundation of skills includes basic English literacy.

To say that a certain program teaches only survival English, English for work, or literacy is to greatly simplify the work of adult ESL education. What actually occurs in a classroom is always a rather fuzzy mix of the goals, assumptions, and preferences of the program, the textbook, and the teacher. What follows is by no means a description of specific programs but rather an explanation of the three focuses (survival, work, literacy) that programs tend to take. I must emphasize that I have yet to find a program that deals with only one of these purposes. Each program I have had contact with includes a mix, but even so, one overall focus is always apparent.

Survival English

Many literacy-level students are new refugees to the United States. Therefore, most programs for such students are focused on "survival skills." Survival programs are intended to ease the difficulties of resettlement by teaching immigrants the skills they need to function in their new culture right away. Survival skills include basic language and "life" skills needed in daily living. Such programs are normally organized thematically. The Adult Performance Level Project at the University of Texas in 1975 "identified five areas of knowledge for an adult to possess in order to function successfully in today's society: occupational, consumer, health, government and law, and community resources" (Savage, 1993). Many Survival English programs base their curricula on those findings. Topics covered in these classes include: introducing yourself, buying food, buying clothes, banking, filling out forms, calling 911, seeing a doctor, etc. The emphasis is on oral language that students need immediately to function independently in their new environment.

Written language in Survival English programs is limited. As Savage suggests, "reading and writing instruction is closely related to the contexts in which learners need to read and write.

Instruction focused on a topic such as shopping would require literacy instruction that enables students to recognize prices and read labels" (1993).

English for Work

Within the Survival English context there is another emphasis in literacy-level ESL programs: job readiness and job retention. When working with refugees, there is a common saying: "The goal of any refugee grant is employment." To become self-sufficient, students must have an income. Oral language in such programs focuses on job interviews, following instructions, asking questions at work, calling in sick, and other work-related language functions. Written language is limited to print the student is likely to encounter: forms, safety instructions, and written job-related directions. English for Work programs also may introduce other essential skills such as basic mathematics and chart reading, as well as cultural topics such as appropriate dress and behavior at an American workplace.

To achieve their goals, both *Survival English* and *English for Work* classes tend to use a functional, communicative approach (discussed in the following section). In reading/writing instruction, students in such programs are introduced only to the print they are likely to see in their daily lives, following a whole-word approach to reading. I believe that while the goals of these programs are understandable given the population, to limit instruction to only these "life" skills is, in itself, too limiting. After finishing these types of courses, students may, in fact, be able to function in daily life. They can go to the store, get a job, call 911, etc. I do not question the value of these skills, but to achieve the self-sufficiency these programs so highly regard, students must also be prepared for further study of English. Programs like those listed above must also introduce skills that will prepare the student to continue studying English. Without further study, students do not have the tools to move up from entry-level jobs; they are left with only the English they need to "get by," not what they need to progress and to become full participants in their communities. This deficit leads to the final and perhaps longer-term goal of literacy-level ESL instruction: English literacy.

ESL Literacy

If educators and social workers expect refugee students to truly "resettle" in the United States, they must help them achieve more than "survival" English. While Survival English and English for Work may be the first goals of an ESL program, these should not be the last. "Developing literacy for learning- for example, reading to review text and aid memory (Savage &

Mrowicki, 1990) or writing to take notes on information presented or read- is essential for less literate adult immigrant learners if they are to succeed in mainstream programs" (Savage 26). The demand for ESL is great, and literacy-level students should be prepared to continue their study of English, either in ESL classrooms or on their own. Without this vital further study, they may not have the tools to move beyond low- paying jobs and submissive roles in their new country.

The issue here is *literacy*. Given the heavily oral goals of Survival English and English for Work, students are left with more developed listening and speaking skills and less developed reading and writing skills. Print is introduced in a very limited manner, with a focus on memorizing those words the student is likely to encounter. However, a program that moves beyond this and provides students with basic English literacy will enable learners to work in different and probably better paying settings. Students will be able to understand print they have not encountered in the classroom, and most importantly, they can continue learning English beyond the oral/functional and written/memorization stage. As JoAnn Crandall suggests, "It is clear that there are large numbers of individuals with little or no prior education in their home countries who desire both English language and literacy skills to permit them access to enhanced educational, social, political, and employment opportunities" (Crandall, 1993). ESL literacy is also important for parenting: "Another factor...is the recognition of the role of parental literacy in children's school achievement, especially important in multilingual families where children have the added need of acquiring a second language" (Crandall, 1993). Clearly the argument for including basic English literacy in ESL programs is strong. With the added skill of literacy, otherwise "surviving" adults can achieve so much more. For more discussion, see "sociopolitical concerns," pages 13-14.

LITERATURE REVIEW:
Factors that Affect Successful Instruction for Literacy-Level Adults

Literacy-level adults are a unique group. They differ from other ESL students in many ways. Not only are they adult learners, but they may be first-time learners in a formal school setting. They are parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Some have never lived in an urban environment. Many of these learners have fought in wars, have been forced from their homes, lived in refugee camps, been imprisoned, suffered through hunger and trauma. Many have lost family members and friends, or have left them behind in uncertain conditions. They are all in a new place that is unlike their home country, raising their children in a culture that is foreign and perhaps threatening to their way of looking at the world. Some work in very questionable conditions, with little or no way of defending their rights as workers and are residents of the U.S.

The ESL learner does not leave her life behind when she enters our classroom. The war comes with her, as do her children's needs, her lost siblings, her poor health, and her memories of a time when the world made more sense. To begin thinking about how to successfully instruct literacy-level adults, we must begin with the entire person- with all the factors that come with each student. The field of second language acquisition is just beginning to look at the impact of these complicating factors on language learning. The following literature review summarizes the major findings on six of these issues to date, but much more research is needed to fully understand their effects. I have limited my discussion to the six factors that appear most pressing and influential to these students as seen in the available research, interviews with teachers, and first-hand observation.

Native Language Literacy

It is no surprise that a student who is literate in her first language will learn a second language more efficiently than one who is not. This fact has been researched and argued in bilingual education debates for many years (see Cummins, 1983,1986). Educator Klaudia M. Rivera explains, "Research evidence suggests that first language literacy promotes second language acquisition, and that literacy skills in the native language are likely to transfer to the second language" (1988). The reasoning behind this is not difficult to accept; reading is a conceptual skill that a person learns only once. Once a student can read, no matter what the

language, that skill can transfer to another language. Reading involves sound-symbol relationships and the association of meaning with printed material. Cummins holds that "the development of first language reading skills provides a deep conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of literacy and general academic skills in the second language" (1983).

Certainly the research suggests that first language literacy is an advantage. But what if an adult student cannot read in her first language? Is it better to first teach her to read in her first language, and then proceed with English? Perhaps that would be ideal. However, for most programs, such instruction is not feasible. Such programs require bilingual instructors and classrooms with one shared native language, and this is rarely the case in ESL programs. Rivera presents some suggestions for overcoming these challenges by including native language literacy in ESL curricula (see Rivera, 1988, 1990). Gillespie has also written about issues and trends in native language literacy instruction (1994).

But, do adult literacy-level ESL students *want* to learn to read in their L1? Typically, adult literacy-level ESL students have not expressed a widespread need for first language literacy. Now that they live in a new country, the pressure and drive to learn English is great while the desire to learn to read and write in Hmong, Somali, Spanish, etc. is not nearly as strong. These priorities that adult students bring to the classroom cannot be overlooked. Delaying ESL instruction in favor of native language literacy could be met with great resistance, and subsequent loss of students. However, there are some programs in the U.S. that offer adult native language literacy, or that incorporate L1 literacy into ESL training. If both teacher and students are prepared and motivated for this training, no doubt the benefits to English literacy are great. In fact, becoming literate in a second language may spark an interest in first language literacy. The two literacies appear to inform each other.

Age

Applied linguists often speak of a "critical period" or "sensitive periods" in language acquisition. These are periods in a person's life afterwhich learning certain aspects of language becomes markedly more difficult, even impossible. Overall, children are more efficient and successful language learners than people who begin learning after puberty. So what if a person begins learning at age 40? Or 75? Logic would dictate that such a learner will have even more difficulty. Research supports this claim (see Er, 1986; Green & Peperis, 1987).

Learning a language is not an easy task, and age has been found to complicate the process. However, as mentioned by Susan Chou Allender, "Studies of aged second language learners have established that the right physical and learning environment can compensate for physiological and socio-cultural variables such as perceptual acuity, psychomotor coordination, and language-memory that are likely to affect their performance and progress" (1998). In addition to those effects of age mentioned, I have also observed a dramatic lack of self-confidence among older learners. Across cultural groups, older learners express such thoughts as "I'm too old to learn anything new," and "I can't remember anything—I don't know why I come to class." In addition to the physical ailments that come with age that may affect learning, this lack of confidence also presents a barrier to English learning.

Trauma

A large number of refugees who enter ESL programs are survivors of trauma. While some students suffer from physical wounds from trauma or torture, mental scars are less visible but equally tragic. In the Twin Cities, Hmong and Somali students are among those who have fresh memories of war and forced migration. "Chronic psychological symptoms, such as memory impairment, short attention span, severe anxiety, and limited concentration, can override positive motivation and impede learning" (Allender, 1998). Other long-term difficulties include "survivors' confidence and self-esteem as learners, their motivation to learn, and their attitudes towards the target language" (Allender, 1998).

Taken together, the physical and mental effects of trauma have an incredibly strong impact on learning English. Teachers can be trained to "provide supportive learning conditions...recognize distress symptoms...evaluate the suitability of topics, resources, and activities for use with these learners" (Allender, 1998). The Refugee Studies Center at the University of Minnesota and the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis offer resources for teachers to better serve their students.

Family Demands

There are two basic ways to look at the impact of family on ESL learning. The first is negative, involving the stress of being busy parents, with the added stress of raising children in a foreign setting. Many Hmong families, for example, have 10-12 children. Naturally, the demands of those children on the parents are great (physically, financially, and emotionally). The family's balance is thrown off as children acquire English more quickly than their parents,

and they may be asked to translate or perform daily tasks that their parents cannot do. This change in power and responsibility in a family can be very disruptive. ESL learners, especially mothers, have a great deal to think and worry about. Cultural differences in parenting add another dimension to family demands. Disciplining children is a particularly charged issue cross-culturally, and learners may be unfamiliar with their rights as parents. In addition to the demands of children, students may have aging parents to care for and spend time with. Family demands can result in reduced concentration and reduced time devoted to English learning. Children and elderly relatives, of course, are a learner's priority. For many, ESL courses are a luxury when time and energy are scarce.

Another way of looking at the impact of family is to see the role of parent as a resource. Some programs focus on Family Literacy, where parent and child (PAC) time is an integral part of instruction. Themes and activities are chosen with children in mind. Parents learn English, literacy, and parenting skills with other parents. By integrating family time and English classes, both sides benefit. Parents are able to bring young children to class with them, and in doing so they share their knowledge and learn others' views about successful parenting. They also avoid child care costs that might incur if they attended adult only programs. Children become familiar with a school setting early and gain exposure to English. Parents are a child's first teacher, and Family Literacy programs draw on this notion. "The initial thrust for family and intergenerational programs drew on research in emergent literacy that showed that parents' skills and practices influence the school achievement of their children" (Weinstein, 1998).

Cultural and Individual Beliefs

When looking at the entire student, we cannot overlook personal beliefs as they impact learning English. Learners "bring to learning their own beliefs, goals, attitudes, and decisions, which in turn influence how they approach their learning" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Richards and Lockhart outline several categories of beliefs that may affect language learning. beliefs about the nature of English, speakers of English, the four language skills, teaching, language learning, self, and beliefs about goals. These attitudes might be culturally driven or of a personal nature. For example, a Russian speaker may want a great deal of explicit grammar teaching, believing that grammar is the key to any language. This student may not see the value of informal conversational practice. On the other hand, an Iraqi student may want to learn only oral language, believing that she has no use for written English.

In addition to attitudes, students have individual ways to learn most efficiently. The field of language-learning styles and strategies explores how students learn and how teachers can cater to these needs. Literacy-level ESL students may be in a formal learning setting for the first time, and they may have no idea how to approach certain tasks. Open discussion and experimentation with language learning styles and strategies may give students and teachers more teaching and learning options. For more information about strategies and styles, see Oxford (1990) and Cohen (1998).

Sociopolitical Concerns

Of all the adult ESL programs I have encountered, the vast majority claim "survival" ESL as a basic goal. Many consider survival English as their only aim. Many ESL professionals have realized that, as argued above, this goal, while certainly important, is limiting. "Survival skills have been defined as those necessary for 'minimum functioning in the specific community in which the student is settled'" (Auerbach, 1985). Few will argue it is not a worthy goal to help students survive. However, perhaps by teaching and expecting *only* survival skills, we are in fact putting immigrants and refugees in a sociopolitical "box" that which they then cannot get out of. If we do not give them the tools to compete for better paying jobs, argue for their rights, and participate fully in their communities, we are helping to keep them in submissive roles in society.

Auerbach observes, "[Adult ESL] texts often prepare students for subservient social roles and reinforce hierarchical relations within the classroom by precluding the creation of meaning and the development of critical thinking skills" (1985). Every curriculum "reflects a particular view of the social order, whether implicitly or explicitly. This 'hidden curriculum' generates social meanings, restraints, and cultural values which shape students' roles outside of the classroom" (Auerbach, 1985).

Freire presents a distinction between *adaptation* to the immigrant's new society or *integration* into it. "Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and transform that reality. To the extent that man loses his ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his decisions are no longer his own because they result from the external prescriptions, he is no longer integrated. Rather, he is adapted" (Freire, 1981). By designing our curricula and lessons to facilitate our students' acquisition of the skills and language needed to "integrate" rather than to

"adapt," we widen their options in their new country. No longer are they limited or held back in submissive roles and low-paying jobs, they are able to get out of the "survival English box."

And how best to help students "integrate" into their new communities? In order for a person to truly become part of her community and defend her rights in our society, literacy is needed. The Curriculum section of this paper explores ways that this can be done. But first, in order to gain a better understanding of the students, programs, and teachers at work in this field, the following section looks at the contexts and practices of three literacy-level instructors in the Twin Cities.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

One way to design successful instruction to literacy-level adults is to describe best practices of teachers who currently succeed with this effort. By doing so, teachers can inform each other of principles and promising activities to use with their students. To gain a better perspective on literacy-level ESL instruction, I observed a number of classes and interviewed three teachers between October 15, 1999, and December 1, 1999. Each instructor teaches in a different program in the Twin Cities. After observing several teachers, I chose these three somewhat intuitively. These three appeared to teach in manners that were consistent with my beliefs about teaching. That is, the classes were student-oriented, had friendly atmospheres, and provided a wide variety of activities. I asked each teacher a series of questions about her students, program, curriculum, and teaching methods.

"Melanie" teaches in a program through Minnesota's Adult Basic Education network. Her class meets 5 days a week for 2 hours each session. Classes are held in an apartment building where all of the students live. She describes her course as a building block to the program's level one course. The main program goals are survival English and gaining comfort with a school setting. Child care is provided on site.

"Sara" teaches in a program through a private non-profit language school. Her students are referred to her through the state's welfare program. They are required to attend English class in order to receive benefits. The main goal of her course is English for job readiness. Sara's class meets 5 days a week for 4 hours each day. Child care is not provided for this program.

"Marie" teaches in a non-profit organization that provides a variety of social services to immigrants and refugees, including English courses. Like Sara, Marie receives referrals from the state welfare office, and students are required to attend in order to receive benefits. Marie describes the program as focused on survival skills and work readiness. Students attend 4 hours daily, 5 days a week. Four hours of class time is devoted to math (in English) every week, as well as monthly parenting sessions and frequent work-related field trips. Child care is provided on-site with bilingual staff.

A summary of teacher responses to these interviews is presented here, organized by question.

1. Please describe the population you teach.

Melanie:
Home Countries: Somalia, Sudan, Vietnam, Ethiopia
Gender: mostly women
Age: from late twenties to late fifties
Occupations: housewives, unemployed

Sara:
Home Countries: Somalia, Mexico, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq
Gender: both men and women, but mostly women
Age: from 22-45
Occupations: mothers, administrators (in home country), saleswomen, store clerks

Marie:
Hmong
Gender: mostly women
Age: 25-55
Occupations: housewives, unemployed

2. How would you describe the literacy level of your students?

Melanie: Education: from no school to 2-3 years of formal schooling. Some students recognize letters, can copy from the board, can read and spell only very familiar words.

Sara: No formal training in their language or English, although some have had formal language training in their home countries.

Marie: Little or no previous schooling.

3. How would you describe their overall English ability (spoken and written)?

Melanie: Students are very beginning-level. They use some formulaic full sentences, but mostly they speak in broken sentences and single words.

Sara: Very low to non-existent.

Marie: Varies for each student, but some are reading a little, some are functional, some are not proficient at all.

4. What are the overall goals of the program you teach in?

Melanie
- Get students ready for more advanced ESL courses in the program
- Help students become comfortable with their new country and setting
- Teach the basics; survival skills

Sara:
- Job readiness
- Survival skills

Marie:
- Survival skills
- Work readiness

5. More specifically, what are the goals of your course?

Melanie:
- Teach basic survival English
- Improve daily routine and attitude by providing social time with others
- Help students become comfortable with a school-setting, meaning class disciplines, etiquette, school culture
- Get them more active, healthy, out of their apartments, so that they can clear their minds and be worry-free for a while

Sara:
- Help the student feel comfortable learning a language and be in school as an adult

Marie:
- Survival skills
- Conversation
- Getting in touch with local services

6. As teacher, what language goals do you hold for your students?

Melanie:
- Fill out forms, job applications
- Be able to speak at daily, necessary situations

Sara:
- Learn the alphabet, from writing it to pronouncing individual letters to learning basic phonetic sounds for each letter, especially vowels
- Learn to hold a pencil
- Learn to read left to right
- Numbers and time

Marie:
- Know personal information (address, phone, etc.)
- Fill out forms
- Beginning reading (phonics, letters, sight words)
- Conversation: greetings, social skills

7. Does your course have a set curriculum? If not, how do you organize your course? How would you describe it as a whole?

Melanie: No set curriculum, an accountability checklist from the program offers a plan. It's organized by survival English functions.

Sara: Yes, but the curriculum is still developing.

Marie: No set curriculum, it depends on student needs. We have weekly themes that I work with, and job counselors provide a checklist that I'm supposed to plan around, too.

8. If you were to create an ideal curriculum for your low-literacy students, what would it include? How would it be organized?

Melanie: It would be similar to our accountability checklist, with survival English and skills needed to get around.

Sara: Materials on video and/or tape. Curriculum similar to two excellent books I've found: *Literacy in Lifeskills* (Heine and Heinle) and *Before Book One* (Prentice Hall).

Marie: I wouldn't use the book, but have a course packet. The packet would contain conversations, readings, pictures, and vocab organized thematically.

9. How do you spend most of your class time?

Melanie: Pair work, individual work, group reading.

Sara: Copying and writing, group work, conversation exercises, videos and tapes.

Marie: Half of our time is spent in whole-group activities, half individual.

10. Name a few specific activities you find effective in the classroom.

Melanie: Getting up and stretching as class begins, reading practice, chanting, rhythmical question and answer, hands-on activities, students writing on board

Sara: TPR, moving around, copying words and sentences, using a pencil, dictation, going to the board to write, memorizing dialogues, facing each other and speaking

Marie: Practice dialogues, memorize short dialogues, talk about feelings, Language Experience Approach, write a story with pictures, LEA following a field trip, scrambled stories, sentence strips.

11. What general advice do you have for a new teacher to this population?

Melanie: Go slowly, don't push, or they'll shut down, cater to individual needs and levels, be patient, show interest in their families an countries, smile, love them, love their countries, don't forget that they had another life in their home countries and use that experience, do lots of different activities.

Sara: Be patient, don't get angry, appreciate their "baggage" and misgivings, cut the teacher chatter and let the room be quiet, give the students time to process.

Marie: Don't expect too much, keep realistic goals, start with the person, personal information, then move on to others, don't assume previous knowledge, be sensitive to the culture, respect their beliefs.

12. What are three highly effective techniques or lessons that you would recommend to a new teacher of literacy-level students?

Melanie:
- Use a pen and cup to learn prepositions, let them demonstrate
- TPR, miming a story
- Put picture stories in sequence
- Identify same and different words
- Use a lot of pictures

Sara:
- TPR, any kind of movement
- Silent way with scarves to learn colors
- Sit at a circular table
- Use magic markers
- Teach phonics, consonants and vowels and basic spelling order (CVC, CVVC)

Marie:
- Language Experience Approach
- TPR
- Use plenty of gestures, in addition to other activities
- Sewing machines—assembly line activity to prepare for jobs, learn vocabulary

Discussion: Teacher Interviews

The three instructors teach in fairly similar programs (geared toward survival and work readiness), and their students are at very similar levels. *Melanie* clearly has an excellent rapport with her students. They respond to her and appear to truly enjoy the class. My impression from the class is that the teacher-student relationship is like family, and, due to Melanie's age, the students see her as almost a daughter. With this relationship, Melanie is able to encourage

students to take risks, try new things, and speak up for themselves. On the other hand, the informality added to the class's lack of structure. It did not seem clear where the students were going or what they were building upon. However, as Melanie herself put it, one of the main goals for the class is for students to get out of their apartments, socialize, learn a little English, and feel better about themselves and their lives. The class definitely meets these goals.

Sara's class was more formal. There was a good rapport among students and teacher, but it was clear that it was a professional, respectful relationship. Sara has incredible patience and really gives the students enough time to think and respond. I appreciated her advice, "Let the room be quiet." Sara's class was more organized and structured, with more focus on reading and writing than speaking. They used a textbook and worksheets to carry out the day's lesson. Sara also had lots of props and realia to demonstrate new vocabulary. It appeared to be an excellent preparation for the workplace and further English study.

Marie's program is unique. Through collaboration with other teachers, Marie's students experience a lot of variety. They meet in large groups with other levels for some activities, go on field trips together, study math together, and then meet separately with Marie for literacy, conversation, and computer time. It is a fun, friendly, but clearly a working atmosphere. With this type of coordinating and sharing of resources, teachers are able to use their strengths well and provide weekly themes that give the program consistency. Marie is very gentle and patient, but expects her students to improve steadily. I admire her flexibility and her appreciation for their cultures (she has picked up quite a bit of Hmong, and filled me in on fascinating aspects of Hmong culture). I enjoy this program very much. It is this kind of collaboration and coordination among teachers that can make the most of adult ESL's usually scarce resources.

From these interviews and class observations, I gathered a series of learning styles that literacy-level students generally appear to prefer. To look at them from the perspective of an instructor, these learning styles have been phrased here as "teaching" styles, or principles underlying good practice. They are organized by my level of certainty.

I am certain that:

- Hands-on activities facilitate understanding and learning.
- Visual aids help these students learn.
- Connecting the classroom to real life is important.
- Physical movement helps students adapt to the school setting and encourages participation.
- Connecting oral language to written language is crucial.

- Incorporating technology in instruction is beneficial for language learning and future employment.
- Frequent breaks are important.

I am fairly sure, but not certain, that:

- Using cultural comparison as a basis for speaking and writing empowers students and allows for rich language use.
- Activities that encourage cooperative learning are beneficial.
- Meaningless copying from the board or textbook is of minimal value.
- Childish time-fillers such as coloring, excessive cutting and pasting, etc. are of little instructional value.
- It's best to give students the time they need to complete tasks in class, and not assign nightly homework.
- Talking about how to learn a language (language strategies) helps students acquire English more efficiently.

The information and conclusions gathered from the teacher interviews is of little value if they are not made more useful for teachers as they plan and teach their courses. What is needed for better teaching and learning is a way of organizing curricula to incorporate the underlying principles of good practice while working toward concrete goals. The following section explores what these goals may include and offers a matrix for structuring an ESL literacy-level course.

CURRICULUM

Goals of a Literacy-Level Course

Through class observations and teacher interviews, a variety of goals can be named for literacy-level students. Given this input and that of programs around the country that have been kind enough to forward me their curricula, the following goals are those that I believe are most fitting for an ideal literacy-level ESL course.

1. *The learner will become comfortable with a school and language learning setting.* This means that the students should be able to participate in class activities, seek assistance, and use strategies for language learning.

Subgoals:

- hold a pencil
- write left to right
- raise one's hand to ask a question
- join in pair and group work
- come to class on time and prepared
- use learning strategies such as reading aloud, copying and grouping words, etc.

2. *The learner will obtain basic literacy skills.* Literacy skills include learning sound-symbol relationships in order to sound out words when reading and writing, as well as attaching meaning to printed language. Most importantly, literacy includes making the connection between oral and written language. Learners should be able to read and write simple language in order to deal with the print they encounter, to express their ideas and feelings, and to record and review information presented in class.

Subgoals:

- pronounce the names of letters (My name is spelled P-A-T-S-Y)
- associate letters with their corresponding sounds (The letter B makes the sound "buh"...)
- write the letters of the alphabet
- recognize same and different letters and upper/lower cases
- recognize same and different words, as well as word boundaries

- sound out simple words encountered in daily life and guess at their meanings
- use creative spelling to write, therefore connecting oral and written language
- increasingly be able to read and understand simple language without visual prompts
- learn basic English letter combinations and spelling rules

3. *The learner will obtain basic numeracy skills.* Numeracy includes counting and dealing with money and prices, telephone numbers, etc. as well as basic mathematics.

Subgoals:

- recognize, write, and say the names of numbers in sequence
- recognize, write, and say number sets like telephone numbers, social security numbers, prices, and ages
- deal with money and prices
- sort and put number sets in order
- use and understand basic charts and graphs
- do basic mathematical computations

4. *The learner will be able to give personal information, both in writing and orally.* This is the first step to achieving self-sufficiency in the United States, a goal of most if not all adult ESL programs.

Subgoals:

- introduce oneself orally to someone else
- say name, address, telephone number, birth date, etc. clearly
- fill out various personal information forms
- interrupt and correct someone who writes or says their personal information incorrectly

5. *The learner will be able to converse on a simple level.* Conversation involves both speaking and listening. Conversation topics may include talking about one's family, health, job, etc., while other programs may allow for more student input, therefore finding topics that are of particular interest to the learners.

Subgoals:

- acquire oral vocabulary needed to name and comprehend simple nouns and verbs (family, job, go, want...)
- exchange information about family, health, feelings, etc.

- acquire conversational ability to accomplish daily tasks at the grocery store, bank, doctor's office, etc.
- exchange reactions to field trips, pictures, and school activities
- talk increasingly about topics with less contextual support and which are unfamiliar to the listener

6. *The learner will become more familiar with the United States and its culture, as well as services available to its residents.* As a society's culture and language are forever intertwined, students of ESL are also students of American culture. This is a delicate issue. The ESL instructor must be respectful and interested in the students' cultures, while presenting useful information and points of view from the U.S.A. Teachers should approach cultural discussions by way of comparing and thereby including student cultures whenever possible. This goal can be also be seen as civics education, offering the student a way to become familiar with her rights and responsibilities as a resident of the United States.

Subgoals:

- gain competence talking about one's home culture, as well as similarities and differences to the United States
- learn cultural facts about local laws and customs
- learn where and how to find more information on cultural topics of interest
- discuss important or challenging aspects of living in the United States
- depending on the program, some courses may choose to include parenting, worker's rights, and other cultural topics as students' interests and needs dictate (see a partial list of cultural contexts on p. 29.)

Sequence

Ideally, lessons reflecting the six goals above should be presented together, in an integrated fashion. However, this is not easy to do every day! Finding a balance among literacy, numeracy, cultural, and conversational goals is important, and it can also be difficult. When looking at the above subgoals, it is clear that some must come before others. For example, a student must be able to associate letters with their corresponding sounds before she can attempt creative spelling or learn basic spelling rules. In an effort to organize a curriculum for ESL literacy-level instruction, the following table sorts the many subgoals into five phases. The rationale behind the curriculum chart was to give a course some guidelines, a path to follow, while allowing for maximum flexibility and student input.

Each "phase," under ideal conditions, represents a unit of instruction that could be completed in approximately 60 hours of instruction. That being said, as all teachers know, different students learn at very different paces. What "clicks" for one student may take weeks or months for another to grasp. Adult education programs are, by nature, messy. Students begin at very different places and have less than ideal attendance. Clearly, students bring much more to class than perfect attention and motivation for English and literacy. There are distractions, obstacles, and a thousand other variables that affect this all-too-neat curriculum. However, it is a place to start. It is a reference for teachers, administrators, and students. It allows a teacher to work with a student and realize, "This learner is at Phase 5 in conversation, but at Phase 1 in literacy skills. OK, here are the gaps we need to work on."

Goal 6, *(The learner will become more familiar with the United States and its culture, as well as services available to its residents)* is not included in the curriculum chart. Cultural contexts cannot be pre-set with any certainty; what is vital to learn in class cannot necessarily be predicted before the course begins. I have left this cultural goal off the chart in order for teachers to select these topics together with their students. Cultural goals can be altered to fit any of the phases. Furthermore, in order to be effective, they must arise out of the students' needs and interests. More discussion and ideas about this sixth goal follow in the "Presentation" section.

Table 1

ESL Literacy Curriculum Sequence	Goal 1 *Learner will become comfortable with a school and language learning setting.*	Goal 2 *Learner will obtain basic literacy skills.*	Goal 3 *Learner will obtain basic numeracy skills.*	Goal 4 *Learner will be able to give personal information, both in writing and orally.*	Goal 5 *Learner will be able to converse on a simple level.*
Phase 1 Subgoals:	Hold a pencil Come to class on time Write left to right	Pronounce names of letters Associate letters with their corresponding sounds Write the letters of the alphabet	Recognize, say, and write numbers in sequence	Introduce oneself to someone else orally	Use oral vocabulary needed to name and comprehend simple nouns and verbs (family, job, go, want...) Begin to use communication strategies like "I don't understand," and "Please say that again."
Phase 2 Subgoals:	Review Phase1 subgoals as needed Come to class prepared Raise hand to ask questions	Review Phase 1 Recognize same and different letters Recognize upper and lower cases	Review Phase 1 Recognize, say and write number sets like telephone numbers, social security numbers, prices, etc.	Review Phase 1 Say name, address, telephone number, birth date clearly Fill out simple information form	Continue Phase 1 Use conversational ability to accomplish daily tasks at the grocery store, bank, etc. Begin exchanging reactions to field trips, pictures, and school activities Use more communication strategies, like "What does ___ mean?"
Phase 3 Subgoals:	Review Phases 1-2 as needed Join in pair and group work	Review Phases 1-2 Recognize same and different words Recognize word boundaries	Continue Phases 2	Continue Phase 2	Continue Phases 1-2 Use more complex communication strategies (listening for key words, using clarification questions)

Phase 4 Subgoals:	Continue Phase 3	Review Phases 1-3 Sound out simple words encountered in daily life and guess at their meaning Use creative spelling to write	Review Phases 1-3 Sort and put number sets in order Do basic mathematical computations	Review Phases 1-3 Fill out increasingly complicated information forms	Review 1-3. Continue to converse about more difficult topics while reviewing past material Continue to build repertoire of communication strategies
Phase 5 Subgoals: Use learning strategies	Review Phases 1-4	Review Phases 1-4 Increasingly be able to read and understand simple language without visual prompts Learn basic English letter combinations and spelling rules	Review Phases 1-4 Deal with money and prices Use and understand basic charts and graphs	Review Phases 1-4 Interrupt and correct someone who writes/says personal information incorrectly	Talk increasingly about topics with less contextual support and which are unfamiliar to the listener.

Presentation

Now that a framework curriculum has been established, how can we as teachers take this into our classrooms? What appears simple and clear on paper turns into something quite different as we plan our lessons. The easiest way to begin is to begin with the goal that is purposely not on the chart: familiarity with U.S. culture and services. By choosing a topic, or a "cultural context" as I call them here, the rest of the goals manage to fall into place.

Cultural contexts will work best if they are of immediate need and interest to the students. Teachers should collaborate with their learners to find out what is important to them when choosing upcoming topics. Planning out the entire semester in advance does not allow for student input. Whatever Cultural Context arises, it can be adapted to the phases the students are currently working within.

The following lists includes some of the many *Cultural Contexts* the literacy-level ESL students may wish to pursue. Some are likely to be seen in Survival English programs, others in work readiness programs, while others are more general topics for programs that plan thematically. The contexts can also be presented as problems that the students must work together to solve. For example, instead of a teacher presenting the topic of *Housing*, a student may ask the question *"How can I find a better apartment?"* that would form the basis for a unit of instruction.

Calendars and Time
Clothing
Describing People
Emergencies and Safety
Family
Feelings
Food
Greetings
Health
Holidays
Housing
Job Interviews
Library and School
Money and Banks
Music and Art
Occupations
Outdoor Recreation
Parenting
Post Office and Mail
Signs and Directions
Time Cards at Work
Transportation
Weather
Winter activities

For example, a student brings to class the income tax information that she received in the mail. She is bewildered about how to deal with this task, but she's been told by friends that it is very important. The instructor chooses to make this the "cultural context" for the following week. The students are mostly in Phase 2 of the curriculum chart.

The instructor decides to focus on the following goals during **Tax Week**:

Goal 1:

- Come to class with tax information for their families
- Answer tax-related questions she assigns
- Raise hands to show when classroom work is finished or when help or more information is needed

Goal 2:

- Using texts from income tax instruction booklets, identify upper and lower case letters

Goal 3:

- Extensively practice the numbers needed to fill out these forms, including income, taxes paid, number of people in family, numbers of forms (1040EZ)

Goal 4:

- Extensively practice filling out the personal information portion of the forms, reading and checking the pre-sent tax labels for accuracy

Goal 5:

- Role-play asking for help with forms at a social service agency, asking an employer for clarification on forms
- Dialogue with each other regarding tax-time and its many challenges!

Goal 6:

- Learn about the process and reasons behind filing tax forms
- Become familiar with the basic terminology involved in filing tax forms
- Find out where to find free help filing taxes nearby and in the native language

***Note:** Late in the week, a guest speaker (with appropriate translators) or bilingual guest speakers from a local tax help agency will spend the morning with the class. They will talk about the filing process and students' responsibilities, how to find free help, and answer learners' questions.*

In summary, the curriculum chart is to be used as a general guide, a way of organizing one's thoughts for a unit of instruction. It is not a format for planning a day's lesson, but rather a way of structuring a particular topic. It is very much a guiding tool that requires the instructor and students to complete the specific goals and tasks. By choosing a topic and subgoals that are of immediate need and interest to the students, their voices can be part of the decision making. This matrix can simply guide the planning of a unit and help teachers build upon their students' current abilities.

Techniques

Techniques are specific ways of reaching our teaching and learning goals. They are what we actually *do* in the classroom. In turn, our activities in the classroom grow directly from the principles that we keep as teachers of literacy-level adults. From interviews with teachers, class observations, and my own experience, I gathered a series of principles regarding teaching literacy-level ESL students. A list of techniques is presented here for each principle.

- **Hands-on activities facilitate understanding and learning.**

  Field trips

  Examples: post office/bank/grocery store, potential employers, social service agencies, museums, state capitol; anywhere that is of interest to the students and offers a basis for conversing, writing, and reading.

  Assembly Line Projects

  Work together to sew a pillow, build a toy or craft, etc. This gives students a workplace-type task and encourages collaboration, problem solving, negotiation, and offers rich language for writing.

  Actual Objects

  Boxes for discussing moving, fruit to share during a food unit, any real "stuff" to talk about, touch, and deal with during class.

- **Visual aids help these students learn.**

  Pictures and Photographs

  If real objects aren't an option, find visual support to aid comprehension. Keep in mind cultural differences; what may seem obvious to us might be unfamiliar to our students.

  Magazines

  Use pictures from magazines as a basis for discussion and writing. For example, one group can be looking for pictures to illustrate "summer" while another looks for "winter." Lay the pictures out and ask pairs to describe them orally, then they attempt to write something–anything–to go with their picture. That connection between oral and written language is key. Let your students hold the pencils!

  Overhead Projectors

  OHPs make things large enough for elderly students to participate, and add interest to class time. Let students write on transparencies, then share them with the group on the OHP.

  Educational Posters

  Alphabet, days of the week, colors...

- **Physical movement helps students adapt to the school setting and encourages participation.**

Change Groupings Often

Use a healthy mix of group work, individual work, and pair work. Do more activities with the class next door.

Total Physical Response

Have students stand up and act out a text, play Simon Says...

Stretch

One teacher I know has a class-stretch before every class. The students wake up and move around and are ready to begin.

Give Up the "Teacher stands/Students Sit" Tradition

Let students write on the board and tack their own work to the walls. Let them get up and consult the dictionary or the days of the week poster across the hall. Have them read or perform at the front of the class.

- **Connecting oral language to written language is crucial.**

Move from Conversation to Writing

Discuss a field trip, picture, or event and then start writing about it. Let students not only offer sentences orally, but assign groups or pairs to create their own texts together, however small. See sample lessons.

Recognize the Word Tasks

1. After using a word repeatedly orally, move to finding that word within a sentence. Have students circle the word that you say, then have students announce words to find and circle within the sentences.
2. Look for certain letters or words in a newspaper article.
3. Play BINGO with words, and have them make the cards and announce the words.

Listen and Write

Have each student cover a certain page in the picture dictionary or a picture story with a blank transparency. Then, say a word or phrase regarding part of that page. For example, have students write "school" on the appropriate picture.

Creative Spelling

Let the students try their best to spell, even if it means mistakes. The attempt to write something—anything—is an important step in recognizing the connection between oral and written language.

- **Incorporating technology in instruction is beneficial for language learning and future employment.**

  Computer Time

  A variety of programs offer word recognition, vocabulary building, matching exercises, pronunciation drills, spelling and math games, etc. Computers never get tired or bored; they offer an unending reserve of patience with repetition that humans lack. Make a big deal out of successes—record scores and give prizes.

  Typing Time

  While painfully slow and frustrating at first, typing is useful for all sorts of things: hand-eye coordination, spelling, repetition of texts, comfort with computers; plus it's awfully fun to take home the finished product. Show students how to change fonts and colors; let them play!

- **Frequent breaks are important.**

  Put Breaks in the Daily Schedule

  Coordinate with other teachers and break at the same time. Give students time to rest, call home, socialize, pray, and process information from class. Breaks are part of every work day, as is coming back on time. Enforce your rules.

- **Using cultural comparison as a basis for speaking and writing empowers students and allows for rich language use.**

  Picture Start

  Find a picture of, for example, the interior of a grocery store. Show it to students and start a conversation about how buying food is different in the United States and in their countries. Elicit information, attitudes, opinions about cultural topics- hospitals, sporting events, holiday meals, houses, dress, etc. Talk about it, then write about it.

- **Copying from the board or textbook is of minimal value.**

  Copy with Purpose

  Certainly students need to practice forming letters and the mechanics of writing. However, as literate, educated adults we copy in order to refer back to something later, or to enhance memory. Our students may not have this "instinct." Have students *do* something with whatever they copy. Talk about it. "Why should you put this in your notebooks? What can you do with it this weekend?" Tell students to read to their children, ask their spouses to participate in a copied dialogue, or tape record themselves reading. Use the copied text again in class. Avoid copying for the sake of copying.

- **It's best to give students the time they need to complete tasks in class, and not assign nightly homework.**

  Schedule Quiet Time into the Day

  Let students work individually or in pairs to complete tasks. Try not to interrupt. Let the room be quiet. As possible, send them home with ideas for studying and preparing if they have time, but don't require it.

- **Talking about how to learn a language (language learning strategies) helps students acquire English more efficiently.**

  Learning Discussion

  Start a conversation about how students learn. Ask successful students what they do, and make a list on the board. When presenting new information, discuss what can be done to remember or better understand.

  Strategy of the Week

  Choose a language learning strategy each week and incorporate it into classroom tasks. Give them ideas for using this strategy outside of class. Have students report back and talk about how this strategy was or wasn't useful. For example: mentally associate a word with a picture, relate new information to a physical action, ask a teacher or assistant for repetition or paraphrasing.

SAMPLE LESSON 1

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH: PRODUCE COMPANY

9:30-10:30 Field Trip

During this hour, all students in the program carpool to a nearby produce company for a tour with a manager. The tour takes place in English, with more advanced students helping the lower levels with difficult vocabulary. Literacy level students are engaged and listen carefully, but appear to comprehend very little of the manager's explanations. However, the tour was very visual, and it was not difficult to understand what the workers and company do.

During the field trip, the literacy-level teacher takes Polaroids of various important parts of the company. The literacy-level students offer suggestions and point at places she should photograph. She takes eight shots altogether.

10:30-10:45 Break

Students carpool back to the school and meet in the large room, all levels together.

10:45-11:00 Response to the Produce Company

A teacher leads a discussion about the pros and cons of working at this particular company. A list is generated on the board with student and teacher input. The teachers are careful to list positive things about the job. (Since this program is job-readiness oriented, the lessons often focus on possible employers and reasons to accept or not accept certain positions.)

Students ask questions, including things about the medical insurance and company pay policy. Although the literacy level-students are not actively participating, they do appear to be listening intently, and they ask each other questions in the L1.

Next the teacher asks students what jobs they know and why these jobs could be good or bad. Some native language is used among the students. Literacy level students appear to tune-out of the discussion at this point.

After a couple of minutes, the literacy-level teacher chooses to pull her students out of the large group and continue in their own classroom.

11:00-11:45 Students Generate a Text about the Field Trip

"What was the first thing we saw at the company?" the teacher asks. A short conversation follows, with mostly one-word contributions from the students. The teacher validates every response. Next the students are put in pairs and given one of the Polaroids. They are asked first to talk to each other about their picture, to think about some words that go along with it.

The teacher circulates and helps students remember what machines are called and compliments their ideas. Next, the pairs are asked to write down a sentence that describes their picture. Students work intently to create sentences, talking to each other in both English and the L1. The teacher circulates and hints, but does not write or spell for the students. They may consult past notes as needed.

When each pair has something to say, they are asked to turn to a nearby pair and share their pictures and sentences. The pairs check each other's work and offer suggestions. Now each pair sets their picture and sentence on the table, and students mill around, looking at each one and deciding what order the sentences should go in. They stand up and look at and read each one, and talk to each other about which goes where. After a few minutes, they decide on an order for the sentences and pictures. The pairs write their sentences on the board in their order. The teachers write them down quickly as well.

1. Trucks bring food to the company.
2. People wash the food.
3. Sometimes machines wash the food.
4. People check the food.
5. People chop the vegetables.
6. People put food in bags.
7. People weigh the food/how many pounds.
8. The company sells the food.

First the teacher reads the sentences aloud and explains any questions about meaning. Students repeat after her. Then students are asked to read the sentences in unison. Finally students are asked individually to read their sentences aloud.

11:45-12:00 Break, or Quiet Time to Read

Students are given time for a break. Some students leave the room for a break, while others look intently at the board and at their notebooks. Some students read aloud to themselves or each other. Some students take this time to copy the sentences into their notebooks. Some help each other understand by using the native language.

12:00-12:15 Sentence Scramble

The teacher returns, and they read through the sentences one more time. For a couple of minutes she points to individual words and asks students to read them. When they struggle, the teacher helps them sound it out by looking at each letter. Then the teacher erases the board and asks students to close their notebooks. She hands each student a half sheet of paper with the sentences typed on it, all in mixed up order. She hands out scissors and students cut the sentences into strips.

Next students must read and put the sentences in the correct order (as had been on the board). As they finish, the teacher checks them and points out errors. While others are finishing, students are asked to read their sentences to a neighbor.

12:15-12:30 Letter Practice

Students put the sentences away and open to a clean piece of paper. As the teacher reads out a word from the text they have written, students are asked to write down the first letter. They do a couple together to check for understanding, and then they continue on their own. After 4 words, they check their answers together (*company, people, trucks, food*). Then they do another 10 words (*bring, machines, weigh, bags, put, wash, bring, machines, pound, to, sometimes*).

Now the teacher asks them to write down the first 2 letters of the word she says aloud. This is obviously more difficult for the students (*chop, check, truck, bring*).

Finally, students are asked to write down the last letter they hear (*food, put, check*). Answers are checked together on the board.

At 12:30, students are told that if they have time, they should look over their sentences again and practice. They will continue with this text tomorrow.

What principles of teaching literacy-level ESL students does this lesson involve?

- Hands-on Learning (field trip)
- Visual Aids (Polaroids)
- Physical Movement (field trip, large group to small, working in pairs and fours, standing to look at all pictures and sentences)
- Connecting Oral and Written Language (talk before writing, reading together aloud)
- Frequent Breaks
- Copy with Purpose (student copy as an option, the lesson will be continued with this text during the next class)
- Time to Complete Tasks

SAMPLE LESSON 2

DAILY TASKS AND PICTURE STORY: ONE DAY'S WORK

8:30-9:00 Introduction to Daily Tasks

Students are in a large group with the other levels. The teacher goes over the day's schedule and answers any questions. Then the teacher leads a brainstorming discussion with: "What do you do every day?" After a bit, the teacher asks how their daily lives are different now than they were in their home countries. Students laugh and exchange lively comments in the L1. The teacher encourages them to stay in English and students offer various observations about how their daily routines are different now. Literacy-level students listen, but don't contribute much to this discussion. They do appear to follow it and exchange comments to each other in the L1.

9:00-9:15 Vocabulary of Daily Tasks, TPR

Literacy-level students go to their own classroom, and they review a few of the actions talked about in the large group (*wash dishes, play with children, go to school, go to work, clean the house, shop, etc.*). For each action, students come up with an action/gesture to go with it. The teacher drills this vocabulary by saying the action, and students show understanding by performing it. Then the teacher performs the action while students say the words. The teacher is sure to go over all the vocabulary needed for the next activity.

9:15-9:30 Giving Words to the Picture Story, Orally

Then she puts up an overhead called "One Day's Work" from *Picture Stories* (Ligon & Tannenbaum, 1990). She covers all but the first two pictures (a man feeding a baby, and a man washing dishes). The teacher asks them what they see, and lets them talk. She validates all contributions and guides them to name things in the picture if they can't express the entire action. When the room falls quiet, the teacher shows the next two pictures, and so on through the whole page (10 pictures total).

9:30-10:00 Writing Words to the Picture Story

Students are put in pairs and given one picture from the sheet that has been cut out and enlarged. On the board, the teacher writes "Every day I..." Students practice saying that and talk about what it means. In pairs, students write what they can about each picture. They are

encouraged to spell creatively, and the teacher helps as little as possible. As pairs finish, they are given another picture to write about.

10:00-10:15 BREAK

As students rest and get up to stretch, the teacher collects their sentences and goes to type them up.

10:15-10:30 Listen and Match

Students are told to close their notebooks and just listen. They still have their pictures in front of them. As the teacher reads each sentence aloud, students raise the picture it corresponds to. When all the sentences have been read, students swap pictures, and the teacher reads the sentences again, in a different order. As questions or struggles come up, the teacher prompts with the actions/gestures from earlier. They repeat this a third time.

10:30-10:40 Reading Together

The teacher puts the sentences up on a transparency. Students have several minutes to read through them on their own, silently. Then the teacher leads them in a reading together, as students repeat. Time is given to explain words students don't understand. Then students volunteer to read individually aloud.

10:40-10:50 Reading Strategy: Key Words

The teacher asks students what the "key" words are in the text—the most important words. Students volunteer 1-2 key words in each sentence, and the teacher underlines them. Students look at the pictures they still have in front of them and talk about each one's key words.

10:50-11:05 Move and Match

Students are given a print out of the sentences to cut up into strips. While they cut, the teacher places the 10 pictures around the room on tables. As they are ready, students move around the room and match their sentence strips to the right picture. They mill around, read their sentences, help each other understand, identify key words, and put their sentences (upside down) near the picture. The teacher helps as needed.

11:05-11:15 Copy the Text

Students are asked to copy the text into their notebooks from the overhead. As they finish, they go on break.

11:15-11:30 BREAK

11:30-11:50 Recognize the Words

Students open up their notebooks to the copied text. They have a few minutes to read through the sentences to a partner and help each other understand and ask about pronunciation. Now students are asked to work individually, without looking at anyone else's work. The teacher says a word from the text and students are asked to find and circle it, or underline it. They must listen carefully and respond quickly. The teacher stops, and they check after every few words. Difficult words are spelled on the board, and together they sound them out.

11:50-12:10 Charades: Vocab Review

The teacher demonstrates charades by acting out one of the actions from the picture. Students guess at the meaning and say the words (*wash dishes, feed the baby, go to work, etc.*). Then students come forward one by one and lead the group in charades. Then the teacher reviews old vocabulary from past lessons with this same game. From time to time the teacher stops and asks a volunteer to write one of the words on the board, or to spell it aloud.

12:10-12:30 Cultural Comparison: Informal Discussion

For the last part of this lesson, students talk about how their daily routine was different in their home countries. This discussion that was begun in the large group was difficult for them to participate in, but here, among their peers, they are more confident and outspoken. The teacher lets the discussion go where students lead it. To assist comprehension, the students draw pictures, use gestures, and consult with each other in L1. Students share and the teacher asks lots of questions to keep them talking and to get quiet students to join in. The conversation is open to whatever topics arise.

Note: The text is reviewed again tomorrow, and the cultural discussion is called upon later as a basis for a journal entry about their daily lives in their home countries.

What principles of teaching literacy-level ESL students does this lesson involve?

- Visual Aids (picture story, overhead projector)
- Physical Movement (TPR, charades, move and match activity)
- Connection between Oral and Written Language (talking about pictures before reading or writing, circle the word task)
- Frequent Breaks
- Copy with Purpose (copied text used for recognize the word activity)
- Time to Complete Tasks
- Language Strategy (identify key words in each sentence to facilitate understanding)
- Cultural Comparison (informal discussion about daily routines, basis for journal entry)

Assessment

Assessment in adult education is a messy business. How can we possibly show our funders all the progress our students have made, when they perform so poorly on standardized tests? In some circles, programs can report how many students have finished their GEDs, gone on to higher level English, or have started working. With literacy-level learners, progress must be measured differently. Some learners may begin to work, yes, and some will move on to our programs' upper levels of English. But what of the many who do not move on quickly but are told to take level "1" over and over? How do we show how much this student is learning?

Clearly, standardized tests are not the answer, at least not yet. There are a few that are used with this population: BEST, CASAS, A-LAS, the Woodcock Johnson. Some states are beginning to implement adult ESL "standards," and TESOL has begun concrete work in publishing its set of standards for adults. But literacy-level learners are different. They're slower, and the progress they make that seems like leaps and bounds to us may not show up at all on their next BEST test.

I advocate a different approach to assessing literacy-level students' progress. By using the Curriculum Chart, we can track a student's progress within each of the goals and phases. Through in-class assessment and observation, teachers can decide whether a student has mastered a particular phase. A teacher can report at the end of 20-week course that the student has progressed from Phase 1 to Phase 3 in literacy, and from Phase 2 to Phase 4 in conversation, for example. It is not a perfect system, and it will not satisfy some funders. However, it is more revealing and specific as to what students are able to do now that they could not before.

In addition to working within the Curriculum Chart when reporting students' progress, I recommend that students set personal goals. This can be done near the beginning of a course or at various times in the course, perhaps at the beginning of a certain unit. It could be a goal of attendance, or of reading a certain book to a child. It could be as big as getting a job, or as small as learning to say hello to the neighbor. Progress is personal, and it must involve and reflect our students. By recording personal goals, with a translator if needed, we can see what students are really after and how they manage to fulfill their hopes.

That is not to say the standardized tests are not useful; they can be a clear indicator when initially placing students into levels, for example, and can show more advanced students' progress with some accuracy. However, for literacy-level learners, a different tool is required to show improvement. A combination of showing movement on the Curriculum Chart and of self-reporting personal goals is certainly a kinder and more accurate indication of what these students

are learning than using standardized tests that were originally designed for more advanced students.

TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP

In an effort to make the information in this paper useful for other teachers, a teacher-training workshop has been designed and conducted. The goals of this workshop are not only to share the information about factors, programs, and curriculum that I have collected, but also to generate discussion and sharing among teachers. My research is limited to the few programs and instructors that I have visited, while other teachers have much to offer from their own classrooms. The following is a brief summary of this teacher-training workshop, originally presented at Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) 2000 in Vancouver, Canada, in March of 2000, and also conducted at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and at Hamline University in St. Paul.

The teacher-training workshop takes one and a half to two hours and is highly interactive. Participants are encouraged to jump in at any time with comments, questions, additions, and disagreements. They work in both pairs and groups at several points during the session.

The workshop begins with the presenter's definitions of literacy-level ESL students. Distinctions are made among pre-literate, non-literate, and semi-literate students. Participants talk to each other about what types of students they have in their programs. After these terms are clear, participants brainstorm in pairs about the challenges of teaching this population and the factors that affect how these literacy-level students learn English. In other words, participants are asked to think about "What makes teaching these students different from teaching adults who are literate in their first languages?" After a few minutes of brainstorming, a list is generated on the overhead as a whole group. This part of the session allows for lots of questions and issues to be voiced, and gives the presenter a clearer picture of the participants' experience with this population.

From here the presenter speaks about the six factors presented in the literature review in this paper: Native Language Literacy, Age, Trauma, Family Demands, Cultural/Individual Beliefs and Sociopolitical Concerns. The audience is encouraged to add to or comment on these factors. Finally, a summary of these factors is presented on the overhead for silent reading (see Hand-Out in Appendix 1, p. 49).

Now the workshop turns to the types of programs that offer classes for literacy-level ESL students. Each type of program is described, and participants share which type of program they

work in and what goals are emphasized. As needed, more types of programs are added to the list.

Moving into the curriculum portion of the workshop, the six goals of ESL literacy are presented and discussed. The presenter explains the process of formulating these goals and of creating the curriculum chart. The hand-out is distributed at this time, and participants follow along the chart as the presenter explains how it is used and organized. In some detail, the sample lessons (filing income tax and the produce company lessons) are walked through step-by-step. Ample time for questions and browsing through the hand-out are given. Some presentations allow for a short break at this time.

Now it is time for practice. In small groups, participants choose one of the cultural contexts on page 58 of the hand-out and set subgoals for the six ESL literacy goals. They work for about 10-15 minutes to plan out this unit of instruction. When finished, 2-3 groups share their work with the whole group.

The last part of the workshop concentrates on principles of teaching literacy-level adults. The twelve principles contained in this paper are described, and participants add to or comment on them in a large group. Examples of activities are explained (p.61 of hand-out). Working again in small groups, they then brainstorm a few activities for 2-3 of the principles. Back in the large group, participants share the activities they thought most interesting or promising. As this activity comes to a close, the rest of the hand-out is quickly explained: student materials, recommended reading, and sample lessons.

The teacher-training workshop appears to have been helpful. Teachers are thankful for the curriculum chart and the detail of the sample lessons. New teachers to this population are especially grateful for the framework for planning units of instruction. Some teachers, however, are resistant to the structured appearance of the curriculum chart, and fear that students' voices and decisions will not be present. To this I respond that the chart gives a general flow of skills, a way of tracking progress and planning ahead. The cultural contexts must come from the students, the teachers must choose appropriate activities to match their students needs and interests.

Questions from teachers often concern how to tell if a student is ready to move on, and how to tell if a student might be learning disabled. I'm often asked what materials are especially effective, and how to work with a class that has some literacy-level students and some students who are literate in the L1. These are all tough questions; I comment as well as I can, and then I

ask the rest of the audience for their input. I continue to be impressed with the suggestions and experience of participants.

Overall, I truly enjoy conducting these workshops. They open my eyes to the kinds of programs and teachers that serve these students. I continually get good ideas for materials and activities from the participants. Further development of this workshop might include assessment options and using technology to facilitate instruction.

Some important and exciting work still needs to be done in the area of literacy-level adult ESL instruction. This project has looked at who these students are and who serves them, as well as the factors that most strongly affect their learning of English. I talked with teachers and observed students to identify preferred learning styles of these students, and from this I was able to develop a set of principles of sound teaching for this population. By organizing the goals and subgoals of instruction, I developed a curriculum matrix that can help teachers structure their courses to include both literacy skills and the topics of interest to their students. The most important result of this project is the teacher-training workshop, since through continued teacher training and sharing we can learn how to serve our students better. It is only through this on-going discussion and experimentation with new curricula and techniques can literacy-level ESL teachers expand and improve their practices.

APPENDIX 1
Teacher-Training Workshop Hand-Outs

What does "literacy-level" mean?

My definitions are adapted from Haverson and Haynes 1982 and Shank 1986. The definitions refer to the students' literacy and education in their *native* languages.

Pre-Literate students

These learners have had no contact with print in their native languages. They represent a group for which there is no written language, only an oral language. Included in this category are students from an oral tradition whose language has only recently developed a written form. It should be noted that pre-literate students may be so only temporarily. Pre-literate learners may encounter print in their native languages later in life, or after immigration to the United States.

Non-Literate students

These students have no reading or writing skills but come from a language group that does have a written form. Their literacy level is due to their lack of education rather than a lack of print environment. It may be that there is a written language, but that the learners lived in rural areas where it could not be easily accessed and was not needed for daily life. Another possibility is that learners' society was disrupted by war for several years, so that public education has been nonexistent for a generation of learners.

Semi-literate students

Learners in this category have had very little formal education in their native language, probably not more than 3-4 years. They have had some exposure to print in their native languages and may be able to recognize some common words by sight.

What are some of the challenges of teaching literacy-level adults?

Factors that Affect Successful Instruction for Literacy-Level Adults:

- Native Language Literacy
- Age
- Trauma
- Family Demands
- Cultural/Individual Beliefs
- Sociopolitical Concerns

FACTORS THAT AFFECT SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTION FOR LITERACY-LEVEL ADULTS

Literacy-level adults are a unique group. They differ from other ESL students in many ways. Not only are they adult learners, but they may be first-time learners in a formal school setting. They are parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Some have never lived in an urban environment. Many of these learners have fought in wars, have been forced from their homes, lived in refugee camps, been imprisoned, suffered through hunger and trauma. Many have lost family members and friends, or have left them behind in unstable conditions. They are all in a new place that is unlike their home country, raising their children in a culture that is foreign and perhaps threatening to their way of looking at the world. Some work in very questionable conditions, with little or no way of defending their rights as workers and residents of the U.S.

The ESL learner does not leave her life behind when she enters our classroom. The war comes with her, as do her children's needs, her lost siblings, her poor health, and her memories of a time when the world made more sense. To begin thinking about how to successfully instruct literacy-level adults, we must begin with the entire person—with all the factors that come with each student (Vinogradov, 2000).

Three Types of Programs

"Survival" English

Survival programs are intended to ease the difficulties of resettlement by teaching immigrants the skills they need to function in their new culture right away.

English for Work

Within the Survival English context there is another emphasis in literacy-level ESL programs: job readiness and job retention.

ESL Literacy

The demand for ESL is great, and literacy-level students should be prepared to continue their study of English, either in ESL classrooms or on their own. Without this vital further study, they may not have the tools to move beyond low-paying jobs and submissive roles in their new country.

Six Goals of ESL Literacy Curricula

The learner will:

1. ...become comfortable with a school and language learning setting.
2. ...obtain basic literacy skills.
3. ...obtain basic numeracy skills.
4. ...be able to give personal information.
5. ...be able to converse on a simple level.
6. ...become more familiar with the United States and its culture, as well as services available to its residents.

Using the Curriculum Chart

- Choose a cultural context that is of immediate interest to your students. As possible, let them discuss and choose on their own.
- Keep in mind your students' "phases" or ability levels.
- Work across the chart, brainstorming subgoals for each of the 6 goals.
- Plan the unit with these subgoals in mind.

Table 2

ESL Literacy Curriculum Sequence	Goal 1 *Learner will become comfortable with a school and language learning setting.*	Goal 2 *Learner will obtain basic literacy skills.*	Goal 3 *Learner will obtain basic numeracy skills.*	Goal 4 *Learner will be able to give personal information, both in writing and orally.*	Goal 5 *Learner will be able to converse on a simple level.*
Phase 1 Subgoals:	Hold a pencil Come to class on time Write left to right	Pronounce names of letters Associate letters with their corresponding sounds Write the letters of the alphabet	Recognize, say, and write numbers in sequence	Introduce oneself to someone else orally	Use oral vocabulary to name and comprehend simple nouns and verbs (family, job, go, want...) Use communication strategies like "I don't understand," and "Please say that again."
Phase 2 Subgoals:	Review Phase1 subgoals as needed Come to class prepared Raise hand to ask questions	Review Phase 1 Recognize same and different letters Recognize upper and lower cases	Review Phase 1 Recognize, say and write number sets like telephone numbers, social security numbers, prices, etc.	Review Phase 1 Say name, address, telephone number, birth date clearly Fill out simple information form	Continue Phase 1 Use conversational ability to accomplish daily tasks at the grocery store, bank, etc. Begin exchanging reactions to field trips, pictures, and school activities Use more communication strategies, like "What does ___ mean?"

Phase 3 Subgoals:	Review Phases 1-2 as needed Join in pair and group work	Review Phases 1-2 Recognize same and different words Recognize word boundaries	Continue Phases 2	Continue Phase 2	Continue Phases 1-2 Use more complex communication strategies. (listening for key words, using clarification questions)
Phase 4 Subgoals:	Continue Phase 3	Review Phases 1-3 Sound out simple words encountered in daily life and guess at their meaning Use creative spelling to write	Review Phases 1-3 Sort and put number sets in order Do basic mathematical computations	Review Phases 1-3 Fill out increasingly complicated information forms	Review 1-3, Continue to converse about more difficult topics while reviewing past material Continue to build repertoire of communication strategies
Phase 5 Subgoals:	Review Phases 1-4 Use learning strategies	Review Phases 1-4 Increasingly be able to read and understand simple language without visual prompts Learn basic English letter combinations and spelling rules	Review Phases 1-4 Deal with money and prices Use and understand basic charts and graphs	Review Phases 1-4 Interrupt and correct someone who writes/says personal information incorrectly	Talk increasingly about topics with less contextual support and which are unfamiliar to the listener.

SAMPLE UNIT 1

Cultural Context: Filing Income Taxes

~ Students are mostly in Phase 2 ~

Under each of the 6 goals, what subgoals can be set for this particular cultural context?

Goal 1: (comfort with school and language learning setting)

- Come to class with tax information for their families
- Answer tax-related questions teacher assigns
- Raise hands to show when classroom work is finished or when help or more information is needed

Goal 2: (basic literacy skills)

- Using texts from income tax instruction booklets, identify upper and lower case letters

Goal 3: (basic numeracy skills)

- Extensively practice the numbers needed to fill out these forms, including income, taxes paid, number of people in family, numbers of forms (1040EZ)

Goal 4: (give personal information)

- Extensively practice filling out the personal information portion of the forms, reading and checking the pre-sent tax labels for accuracy

Goal 5: (converse on a simple level)

- Role-play asking for help with forms at a social service agency, asking an employer for clarification on forms
- Dialogue with each other regarding tax-time and its many challenges!

Goal 6: (familiarity with US, culture, and services)

- Learn about the process and reasons behind filing tax forms
- Become familiar with the basic terminology involved in filing tax forms
- Find out where to find free help filing taxes nearby and in the native language

Note: *Late in the week, a guest speaker (with appropriate translators) or bilingual guest speakers from a local tax help agency will spend the morning with the class. They will talk about the filing process and students' responsibilities, how to find free help, and answer learners' questions.*

SAMPLE UNIT 2

Cultural Context: A Produce Company: Potential Job

~ students are mostly in Phase 4 ~

Under each of the 6 goals, what subgoals can be set for this particular cultural context?

Goal 1: (comfort with school and language learning setting)

- Work with a partner to create sentences about the trip to the produce company
- Work with a small group to talk and write about the trip and discuss pros and cons of working for this company

Goal 2: (basic literacy skills)

- With printed material from the company, work on sounding out and guessing meanings of words
- Use creative spelling to write about the experience at the produce company

Goal 3: (basic numeracy skills)

- Practice sorting labels of products from the company
- Use the company's inventory forms to practice counting and calculating types of products

Goal 4: (give personal information)

- Learn how to fill out this potential employer's application materials
- Role-play human resource staff member and potential employer; practice giving and correcting personal information

Goal 5: (converse on a simple level)

- Learn vocabulary related to this workplace
- Practice asking supervisor for assistance, instructions
- Role-play co-worker conversations
- Role-play calling in sick, asking for time off, schedule change, etc.

Goal 6: (familiarity with US, culture, and services)

- Learn about this potential workplace, the pros and cons of working there
- Find out how to apply for this and similar jobs, what qualifications/skills are necessary

Cultural Contexts

- Money and Banks
- Parenting
- Housing
- Music
- Winter Activities

In pairs or threes, choose one cultural context to explore. Decide what "phasę" your students are mostly in, and the set subgoals for each of the six goals in this cultural context.

Cultural Context for this Unit _____ **Students' Phase/s** _____

Goal 1 (comfort with school and language learning setting)
Subgoals:

Goal 2 (basic literacy skills)
Subgoals:

Goal 3 (basic numeracy skills)
Subgoals:

Goal 4 (personal information)
Subgoals:

Goal 5 (simple conversation)
Subgoals:

Goal 6 (familiarity with US, culture, services)
Subgoals:

Principles of Teaching Literacy-Level Adults

For each of these principles, what are some specific activities or techniques that bring the principle into the classroom? In other words, what specifically can we DO to reflect this principle about teaching literacy-level students?

Work in small groups to brainstorm classroom activities for a few of these principles.

- Hands-on activities facilitate understanding and learning.

- Visual aids help these students learn.

- Connecting the classroom to real life is important.

- Physical movement helps students adapt to the school setting and encourages participation.

- Connecting oral language to written language is crucial.

- Incorporating technology in instruction is beneficial for language learning and future employment.

- Frequent breaks are important.

- Using cultural comparison as a basis for speaking and writing empowers students and allows for rich language use.

- Activities that encourage cooperative learning are beneficial.

- Copying from the board or textbook is of minimal value.

- It's best to give students the time they need to complete tasks in class, and not assign nightly homework.

- Talking about how to learn a language (language strategies) helps students acquire English more efficiently.

Examples of Classroom Techniques to Match the Principles of Teaching Literacy-Level Adults

#5. Connecting oral language to written language is crucial

Move from Conversation to Writing
Discuss a field trip, picture, or event and then start writing about it. Let students not only offer sentences orally, but assign groups or pairs to create their own texts together, however small. See sample lessons.

Recognize the Word Tasks
1. After using a word repeatedly orally, move to finding that word within a sentence. Have students circle the word that you say, then have students announce words to find and circle within the sentences.
2. Look for certain letters or words in a newspaper article.
3. Play BINGO with words, and have them make the cards and announce the words.

Listen and Write
Have each student cover a certain page in the picture dictionary or a picture story with a blank transparency. Then, say a word or phrase regarding part of that page. For example, have students write "school" on the appropriate picture.

Creative Spelling
Let the students try their best to spell, even if it means mistakes. The attempt to write something—anything—is an important step in recognizing the connection between oral and written language.

#8. Using cultural comparison as a basis for speaking and writing empowers students and allows for rich language use.

Picture Start
Find a picture of, for example, the interior of a grocery store. Show it to students and start a conversation about how buying food is different in the United States and their countries. Elicit information, attitudes, opinions about cultural topics—hospitals, sporting events, holiday meals, houses, dress, etc. Talk about it, then write about it.

#10. Copying from the board or textbook is of minimal value.

Copy with Purpose
Certainly students need to practice forming letters and the mechanics of writing. However, as literate, educated adults we copy in order to refer back to something later, or to enhance memory. Our students may not have this "instinct." Have students *do* something with whatever they copy. Talk about it. "Why should you put this in your notebooks? What can you do with it this weekend?" Tell students to read to their children, ask their spouses to participate in a copied dialogue, or tape record themselves reading. Use the copied text again in class. Avoid copying for the sake of copying.

APPENDIX 2
SUGGESTED STUDENT MATERIALS

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Related Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Literacy Education (NCLE)
http:// www.cal.org/ncle/

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)
http://www.nifl.gov

The Center for Literacy Studies (CLS)
http://cls.coe.utk.edu

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